Progress Report on the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women

October 2003 - December 2004

105-04333/

The Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women

Progress Report

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A Message from the Minister

I am very pleased to present the first *Progress Report on the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women*. The *Action Plan* is a work in progress, designed to guide government in addressing women's equality issues in this province. It provides a benchmark from which we can measure progress as we work towards our goals.

Government's commitment to women's equality is evidenced by progress made on actions identified in the *Action Plan*. In particular, I am pleased to report that:

Child Care Saskatchewan, introduced in 2003, is on schedule to meet its four-year goal of 1,200 new child care spaces. The primary focus of the initiative is to increase child care spaces for women pursuing training or educational opportunities. There are now eight new or expanded school-tied child care centres that support students who are continuing their education. In addition, parent subsidies have increased both in number and amount.

The new *HomeFirst* strategy is underway with 693 new affordable housing units completed or under construction at the end of 2004. The goal is to have 2000 new affordable housing units by 2008, targeted to low-income families with children. Coupled with this are a number of other support initiatives such as housing supplements, enhanced repair programs, home ownership programs and senior home maintenance assistance.

Access to women health care providers has improved significantly in rural and remote areas of the province with the addition of 40 licensed Registered Nurses (Nurse Practitioners) since April 2004. The introduction of the province's 24-hour, toll-free *HealthLine* has been effective in providing a wide range of health expertise to Saskatchewan residents, and in reducing costly hospital visits.

Annual funding of $2.15M has been committed for new and enhanced supports for people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and other cognitive disabilities. As well, programs that provide employment and education assistance to persons with disabilities have been strengthened to improve workplace participation and build independence.

The new Department of First Nations and Métis Relations was established in October 2004 to provide a more focused approach to managing the Province's relationship with First Nations and Métis people and to advancing our shared interests toward increased participation of First Nations and Métis people in the social and economic life of Saskatchewan. Attention will be placed on supporting the development of First Nations and Métis women's organizations and urban service delivery agencies to enable them to undertake projects and policy development activities.

Government has increased its representation on the Intragovernmental Committee of Advisors on Women's Policy to include the Commercial Crowns. Advisors have been appointed in Crown Investments Corporation, Information Services Corporation, SaskEnergy, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, SaskPower, SaskTel, Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and SaskWater. Work is underway to include Treasury Board Crowns and when this occurs, women's issues will be on the agenda of every government department and Crown Corporation.

Another milestone is the work that has been done around gender-based analysis (GBA). GBA is a method used to assess the impacts of policies and programs on both women and men. The application of gender-based analysis is important and effective in establishing sound public policy. We know that training key government staff is essential and several GBA training session have already been offered. In addition to distributing information materials, an updated course has been developed that will soon be available to government decision-makers.

In this our Centennial year, I am excited and pleased that my department is participating in several initiatives that recognize women's contributions to society and their successes and accomplishments throughout the years. In particular, the Status of Women Office has partnered with the Museums Association of Saskatchewan to provide a touring provincial exhibit of their *Women of Influence Project*. This project focuses on everyday women who have made significant contributions in many Saskatchewan communities.

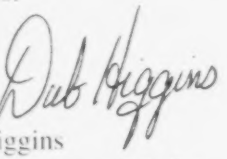
The Status of Women Office has also contributed an article to the *Women's Encyclopedia*, a Centennial project of The Canadian Plains Research Centre. This article highlights a progression of women's programs and key accomplishments since the Saskatchewan Women's Division was established in government in 1964.

The Work and Family Unit plans to introduce *The Provincial Family-Friendly Workplace Award* to promote work and family/life balance and to acknowledge Saskatchewan organizations that implement positive workplace practices. As part of the *Workplace Award* celebration, the Unit will join with Vanier Institute of the Family and other provincial organizations in hosting a gala evening event.

Of great significance to this province is government's recognition of 2005 as the "Year of First Nations and Métis Women in Saskatchewan". This recognition provides a vehicle to raise awareness of the many roadblocks hindering the economic and social progress of First Nations and Métis women.

I am proud of the progress made in responding to the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women.* Together we will continue to work towards our shared vision outlined in the *Action Plan.*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their participation and cooperation in the development and implementation of The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women.* Whether as community groups, individuals or government workers, we have shown that together we can have a positive impact on the lives of Saskatchewan women, their children and their families.



Deb Higgins
Minister Responsible for
the Status of Women

Introduction

This report provides an update of government initiatives taken to address actions outlined in the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women*. Although annual reporting periods differ between government departments which report fiscally and Crown Corporations which report by calendar year, the end result provides a clear indication of progress.

The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* is a comprehensive and strategic approach to addressing women's equality issues. Released in October 2003, it is an expression of government's commitment towards advancing the status of women in Saskatchewan. It is a framework that will be built upon over the coming years and a benchmark from which progress will be determined.

The *Action Plan* was developed in cooperation with the women's community after extensive consultation. It expounds a shared vision of a society where women's full participation, recognition and safety are ensured.

Under the direction of the Status of Women Office, Advisors on Women's Policy were asked to report on measures that had been taken in each of their respective departments and Crown corporations in response to each identified action.

These responses are listed in numeric order under the *Action Plan's* four main goals: Economic equality and security; Safety; Health and well-being; and Participation in leadership and decision-making.

It is our intent that a review of government's progress and actions be conducted at the upcoming Women's Forum scheduled in Regina on April 6, 2005. It is important that we take time to ensure that we are addressing the needs of present-day society. The collaborative work of government and the women's community must not only reflect change but also direct change.

More information is available on the Status of Women Office website at www.swo.gov.sk.ca or by contacting the office at 1870 Albert Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 4W1, or phone 787-7401.

"Empowered women who have the opportunities and resources to influence and benefit from the social, political and economic life of Saskatchewan."

Economic Equality and Security of All Saskatchewan Women

#1. The Aboriginal Employment Development Program will maintain and increase the number of partnerships that link employers to the Aboriginal community. Emphasis will be placed on preparing workplaces to reduce barriers and increase access to jobs for Aboriginal women and men, with a view to increasing the number of both Aboriginal women and men who participate in the labour force.

Since its inception in 1998 up to October 31, 2004, the *Aboriginal Employment Development Program* had entered into 58 partnership agreements with employers. These employers have hired 1,951 Aboriginal people. The majority of employees hired were in the health sector and 80% of the health sector employees are women.

In preparing the workplace, Aboriginal cultural awareness education was provided to 4,074 managers and employees between 1998 and 2003, with an additional 4,372 having taken the training between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004.

Workplace training occurs when an employer partners with a training institution and possibly an Aboriginal organization to train for direct skills. The employer provides onsite practical training for a short period. Workplace training means the training is linked directly to employer need and the opportunities for the student to be successfully employed is high. From 1998 to 2003, 929 persons took workplace training, and an additional 206 participated in 2003-04. The majority of participants were women.

In the future, the *Aboriginal Employment Development Program* plans to confirm the level at which Aboriginal employees are working in the workplace, that is, entry, middle management and senior management.

#2. The province will add 1,200 child care spaces in Saskatchewan over the next four years as part of the recently signed federal/provincial/territorial agreement on Early Learning and Care. Priority will be placed on providing child care spaces to women who are pursuing training or educational opportunities.

In April 2003, *Child Care Saskatchewan* was introduced. It is the largest expansion of licensed child care in Saskatchewan history and involves the development of 1,200 child care spaces over four years.

At the introduction of *Child Care Saskatchewan*, Saskatchewan had 7,283 licensed child care spaces, including 17 infant care programs in schools around the province. Saskatchewan is currently on track to keep its commitments under *Child Care Saskatchewan*. All commitments under *Child Care Saskatchewan* will be completed by March 2007.

As of September 2004, midway through the initiative's second year, an additional 784 licensed child care spaces have been added in the province, for a total of 8,067. Eight new and expanded centres affiliated with schools opened between April 2003 and September 2004, to support students to complete their education programs.

#3. Small Business Corporate Income Tax Rate will be reduced from 6% to 5.5% on January 1, 2004, and to 5% on January 1, 2005.

The small business tax rate was reduced from 6% to 5.5% on January 1, 2004 and will be reduced to 5% on January 1, 2005.

Saskatchewan small businesses, defined as Canadian-controlled private corporations, pay this reduced rate on the first $300,000 of active business income. For income above the threshold, businesses pay the general corporate income tax rate of 17%.

#4. The provincial government will make early learning and care for all young children a priority by fostering healthy child development wherever the child is and enhancing the comfort of parents who are working or taking training that their children are being well cared for. The priority will be for families who experience significant challenges, including disabilities and those who experience family violence.

A growing body of national and international research points to the benefits of blending the care and early learning of children. Research also shows that blended approaches are most successful when parents are active participants, are valued and their roles supported.

Some Saskatchewan initiatives that focus on the learning and care needs of young children include the introduction of Prekindergarten and KidsFirst to the province, the signing of the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Care and expansion of licensed child care spaces under *Child Care Saskatchewan*.

Public discussion forums with stakeholders took place in May and June 2004, in Regina, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Carlyle, Swift Current, Meadow Lake, Beauval, La Ronge, Tisdale, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. The discussion forums were an important step on the way to creating a provincial strategy for early learning and care.

A symposium refined the information that had been gathered in the stakeholder discussion forums. The Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit (SIDRU) from the University of Regina facilitated the discussion forums and the symposium.

SIDRU submitted a report to Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment that reflects the interests and needs identified during this consultation process. The information gathered will help to develop an early learning and care strategy and action plan for the province. The report, *Making Children a Priority: Saskatchewan Listens*, can be accessed at www.dcre.gov.sk.ca/publications/majordocuments.html

The province is currently negotiating with the federal government for new resources that will address the care and developmental needs of young children.

#5. The government will work toward enhancing the affordability and availability of child care for low-income working families, many of whom are single parents.

Saskatchewan recognizes that affordable child care supports the employment of low-income families, including single parent women. It is a key component of the Building Independence initiative.

Child Care Saskatchewan was introduced in April 2003, and is the largest-ever expansion of child care spaces in the province. The plan also proposed an increase to parent subsidies. In April 2003, 3,592 subsidies were issued at an average subsidy of $220 per child. Eighty-eight percent of the families in receipt of a subsidy were single-parent families and 97% of these were women.

By September 2004, midway through the second year of *Child Care Saskatchewan*, the number of child care spaces in the province increased by 11% compared to 2003. In October 2004, the number of subsidies paid to families increased to 3,664, at an increased average of $238 per child. Eighty-nine percent of subsidies went to single parent families, the majority of whom were women.

#6. The provincial public service will continue to implement the Aboriginal Management and Professional Internship Program, to prepare Aboriginal women and men for management roles in the public service.

The Aboriginal Management and Professional Internship Program continues to be implemented in the public service. For more information on this program visit www.gov.sk.ca/psc/intern/, and to find out information on the results of this program please see the Public Service Commission annual report at www.gov.sk.ca/psc/ar/report03-04.pdf

#7. The provincial public service will implement the new Corporate Human Resource Plan, which includes a goal of diversity, with actions to support an increasingly representative workforce at all levels of the public service.

The Corporate Human Resource Plan has been implemented and has actions to support an increasingly representative workforce at all levels of the public service. The Corporate Human Resource Plan and the measurement of its actions can be viewed at www.gov.sk.ca/psc/ar/report03-04.pdf

#8. The provincial public service will continue to work with public service unions on issues related to workplace diversity and work-life balance.

The public service continues to work with public service unions on diversity and work-life balance, and collective agreement language supports diversity initiatives, such as designated staffing and employment equity committees. For information about work-life balance in the public service, visit http://www.gov.sk.ca/psc/worklife/default.htm; to view the performance measurements on work-life balance in the public service go to http://www.gov.sk.ca/psc/ar/report03-04.pdf

#9. The Government of Saskatchewan will promote labour force attachment among low-income single parents by enhancing education and training opportunities, both prior to employment and continuing as they are employed. This could include working with employers to identify work issues of women in their labour force and determine what infrastructure supports would address these issues. Efforts will focus on those who are currently marginalized and require additional supports, particularly those with a history of family violence or disability.

Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment delivers a broad range of supports, services and programs that help unemployed people, both women and men, to receive the training, supports or work experience they need to participate in the labour market.

The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) was introduced as part of the Building Independence initiative in 1998 to assist lower income parents with the child-related costs of working. In 2003-2004, an average of 7,649 families received SES with 90% of all SES recipients being women. Seventy-one percent of these women are single parents and 19% are women in two-parent families.

#10. The Government of Saskatchewan will explore "career laddering" involving women pursuing next step options within workplaces, enhancing their skills through such things as preparing a resumé appropriate for the next rung on the career ladder and coaching for interviews. This will include a focus on women with disabilities and how their employment can be better facilitated.

Supporting initial employment is a necessary first step to creating broader career laddering options for women.

Women make up approximately 50% of people who access services to improve their employability, including resume writing tools, career action planning, access to training-related financial support and employment supports.

From April to November 2004, almost 9,000 women participated in programs to enhance their employment skills through Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services.

Clients Accessing Employment Services	April 2003-March 2004 (12 months)		April 2004-November 2004 (8 months)	
	Number of Women	Percent Women	Number of Women	Percent Women
• Individual Services (referrals, resume writing, job search etc.)	2093	46%	1289	50%
• Career Action Plans	5275	46%	3394	49%
• Skills Training Benefits	1045	41%	700	46%
• Employment Programs	2428	51%	1714	47%
• Career and Employment Service agreements with Community-Based Organizations.	2986	41%	1793	42%

#11. The Government of Saskatchewan will explore mechanisms to strengthen services available to immigrants in the province to facilitate their settlement, adjustment and full participation in our communities, including mechanisms for improving employment and career opportunities for immigrant women.

Immigrant women experience difficulties entering the labour force because of a lack of Canadian work experience, non-transferability of foreign qualifications or credentials and English language problems.

The 2001 Census showed a total of 24,060 female immigrants in Saskatchewan. These women earned an average of 11% less than equivalent non-immigrant women. More immigrant women in Saskatchewan have a university degree compared to the non-immigrant population of the same age range, but 25% of these women are in a job requiring no more than a high school education. This was twice the proportion of the non-immigrant population.

Advanced language training and in particular occupation-specific language training, is a significant service need in Saskatchewan, as identified in the *Meeting Needs and Making Connections* Report and by the Provincial Settlement and Integration Planning Council.

The Immigration Branch in Saskatchewan Government Relations provided funding to the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA) in 2003-04, for phase one of the Service Coordination and Enhancement Project. SAISIA is an umbrella organization for the four immigrant settlement agencies in Saskatchewan – the Regina and Saskatoon Open Door Societies and the Moose Jaw and Prince Albert Multicultural Councils. SAISIA has developed a client-centered model for intake and assessment, a framework for information management, a model for community partnerships, a framework for the delivery of orientation services to immigrants and refugees, and an informational booklet, *Settling in Saskatchewan.* The booklet will be translated into six different languages.

In November 2004, the Province of Saskatchewan entered into an agreement with the federal government to improve language training for adult immigrants in Saskatchewan. Under the agreement, the provincial and federal governments will together contribute $264,000 in 2004-05 to support research and planning under the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) Initiative. The agreement will be cost-shared equally by Saskatchewan and the federal government. The ELT initiative is an important step in building Saskatchewan's capacity to deliver enhanced language training, mentoring and work placement opportunities for immigrant women and men.

#12. The Government of Saskatchewan, in partnership with the broader learning sector, will seek to increase educational opportunities and achievements by women, particularly in areas of non-traditional study.

University of Regina (U of R)

- Consistently over 60% of the student body is female, and an even larger percentage of degrees/certificates/diplomas are awarded to females (over 65% in the 2003-04 academic year).
- Given the very high percentage of women already in the student body, the U of R is focusing upon human resource initiatives to ensure equal opportunities and positive role models for all "equity" categories throughout its workforce.
- In 2004, 67% of the spring convocation and 62% of the fall convocation were women.

University of Saskatchewan (U of S)

- More women than men are participating in university education and are graduating in a broad base of disciplines. Across all faculties, women account for 60% of all students in the 2003-04 academic year.
- Women have made gains in participation rates in a number of traditionally male dominated faculties. Over 50% of the enrolment in Veterinary Medicine (small animal), Law, Agriculture, Commerce, Kinesiology and Medicine was female in the 2003-04 academic year.
- Engineering students offer a program called "Discovering Engineering" to Grade eight girls to learn first hand what engineering is all about.

Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission

- Entry into apprenticeship training is through an employer willing to register the employee as an apprentice. A key communication message of the Commission is to promote women, as well as other underrepresented groups to be considered by employers, for apprenticeship opportunities.
- Nine hundred and thirteen women were registered as apprentices with 257 in predominately male occupations (from July 2003 to June 2004).

Saskatchewan Learning – Adult Basic Education (ABE)

- ABE programs provide the opportunity for adults who have not completed high school to attain that standing. In 2002-03, a total of 5,033 students were enrolled with 3,376 reported as having completed their program. Sixty-two percent of these ABE students were women.
- Seventy-one percent of the 3,129 women who attended ABE programs in 2002-03 completed their program. Women tend to receive the most graduation awards.
- Women enroll in ABE programs to get off social assistance, get a job or to attain qualifications needed for further education.
- Provincial Training Allowances (PTA) provide the income that makes attendance possible.

Saskatchewan Learning – K-12 Schools

- Saskatchewan Learning addresses gender equity issues in all curriculum development and renewal projects. Gender equity issues specific to a subject area are profiled at the beginning of curriculum guides and issues are also addressed in in-service workshops with teachers.
- Girls out-performed boys in all core-curricula Level 30 subjects in 2002-03. This is particularly noteworthy in subjects such as Mathematics, Calculus, Chemistry and Physics where the average marks attained by girls were at least two percentage points higher than those attained by boys.

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)

- SIAST's Education Equity Policy is to assure access to adult basic education and post-secondary educational opportunities by potential students such that the proportions of targeted equity groups to the total student body are the same as in the working age population of Saskatchewan.
- "Women in predominately male trades" is one of four targeted equity groups at SIAST.

Women in Predominately Male Trades at SIAST			
Certificate & Diploma	Total Students	# of Women	% of Total
SIAST Total Enrolled '02-'03	2021	250	12.4%

- The Education Program at SIAST supported the following in the 2002-03 academic year:
  - Girls Exploring Trades and Technology (GETT) where a coordinator provided workshops for high schools, Canada - Saskatchewan Career and Employment Service Centres and community agencies to promote industrial and technical occupations, as well as identified current programs and resources. GETT camps introduce grade seven and eight girls to career options in industrial and technical occupations. GETT programs incorporate gender and social awareness issues in the curriculum.
  - Women in Technology (WiTECH), an evening course for women to explore training options in a variety of programs.
  - Construction Technology for Women, a partnership program with SIAST where grade 11 and 12 girls learn first hand from female role models in trades and technology occupations, is held annually.
- For the Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) programs, the instructors/role models/workshop facilitators are all women who have completed training in trades or technology occupations.

#13. The province will support programs and services for women in training for, or who are working in, non-traditional occupations.

University of Saskatchewan (U of S)

- Of the 40 recommendations in the recently released *Review of Campus Safety* (2004), the majority have been implemented including increased foot patrols of main buildings, more closed circuit TVs, audits of what could be unsafe areas and improved communication – campus alert boards and an e-mail network.
- The new "Working Alone" policy (2004) at the U of S will benefit everyone on campus, but particularly women as they now have official procedures in place when they are on campus after dark to provide a safer learning environment.

Saskatchewan Learning – Adult Basic Education (ABE)

- Many ABE students are young women who are single parents, and who have experienced adversity which includes lack of adequate child care, opposition from an abusive spouse, transportation problems, or alcohol/drug use in the home. Counselling and peer support is helpful in dealing with personal barriers and thus helps people to continue in programs when they may otherwise quit. Saskatchewan Learning contributes $800,000 to all of the regional colleges and technical institutes annually to help fund their counselling functions.

Saskatchewan Learning – Student Financial Assistance

- The Canada/Saskatchewan Study Grant for Women in Non-Traditional Doctoral Studies program provides grant assistance of up to $5,000 annually (per loan year) to women doctoral students with demonstrated need studying full time in non-traditional fields of study. The purpose of this Federal/Provincial Study Grant is to expand women's participation in doctoral studies where women have been traditionally underrepresented. For 2003-04, six women received this grant.

Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation

- The Women in Management and Non-traditional Occupations (WINTO) team promotes the involvement of women in "non-traditional" occupations to create and embrace the opportunities of the 21st century. Objectives include increasing the recruitment, retention, participation; advancing opportunities; fostering positive work environments; and facilitating learning and support programs for women.

#14. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to strengthen supports for women and men with disabilities in the post-secondary education system to ensure that every person gets the education and training that supports best employment outcomes and ensures the economy has the work force it needs for future growth.

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the need to strengthen supports for men and women with disabilities to promote positive employment outcomes and ensure the economy has the work force it needs for future growth.

The Recruiting and Retaining Initiative is a partnership between Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment, the Public Service Commission, and Office of Disability Issues to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in Executive Government by assisting departments to recruit and retain persons with disabilities within the public service.

The Employment Supports Program for Persons with Disabilities provides workplace supports to both unemployed and employed individuals. The program is aimed at reducing the impact of an individual's disability and increasing their ability to acquire and maintain employment.

A variety of regionally-based services specifically for persons with disabilities and other barriers to employment are provided by Career and Employment community-based organizations.

People with disabilities (self declared) accessing services, April 2004 – December 2004	Number of Placements	Number of Participants
Recruiting and Retaining persons with disabilities in the public service	n/a	18
Employment Supports	634	533
Career and Employment Service agreements with Community-based Organizations	958	807

Saskatchewan Learning administers the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Program and Study Grants provide funding for disability-related supports to adults with disabilities who are pursuing post-secondary education. They are intended to cover the cost of disability related supports needed in order for students to achieve their full potential. Supports may include, but are not limited to, such items as specialized computer equipment, tutoring, alternate format materials, and special transportation and exam accommodations.

Study Grants provide the first $10,000 per year in support. In cases where the student is unable to receive a student loan or where the costs exceed $10,000 per year, EAPD support is extended.

Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation has been the recipient of a National and a Provincial Award in recognition for their willingness in providing employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual challenges.

#15. The Aboriginal Government Employees' Network (AGEN) in partnership with the Public Service Commission, Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs* and Crown Investments Corporation, will launch a Speakers Bureau in Fall 2003 to encourage female and male students to stay in school and consider careers in the public service.

*This Action is now the responsibility of First Nations and Métis Relations, formerly the Aboriginal Affairs Division of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs.

Twenty-six of 56 employees from the public service who have volunteered to actively participate in the Speakers Bureau have been trained to deliver a presentation to students in grades seven to nine. To date, there have been 12 presentations made in Saskatchewan.

Awareness of the Speakers Bureau is being raised among Aboriginal organizations and affiliates and in schools and is being evaluated by teachers, parents, and students.

Awareness of the bureau has been created within the AGEN membership. The Speakers Bureau was launched at the annual AGEN forum. Recruitment and training of volunteers from the AGEN membership continues to be important.

#16. The Government of Saskatchewan will work to improve the quality of housing for low-income individuals and families and the cost of that housing.

Over 30,000 Saskatchewan households benefit from existing housing programs. There are 10,365 family housing units and 13,205 senior housing units in the province. The remaining 6,765 subsidized units in the provincial portfolio are targeted to single people, persons with special needs and homeowners. Women make up approximately 40% of people living in provincially subsidized housing and men make up 20%. The remaining 40% of those living in these households are children. The majority of women living in provincially subsidized housing are low-income single parents.

In May 2004, the province introduced *HomeFirst*, a new strategy to meet the housing needs of Saskatchewan people. This innovative five-year plan will reduce the housing problems of low to moderate-income families and individuals and includes:

- Two thousand new affordable housing units by 2008. As of December 2004, approximately 693 new affordable units have been developed or under construction. Half will be targeted to low-income families with children.

- A new housing supplement is expected to benefit up to 10,000 low-income families. The province has been developing the related infrastructure and will begin implementation in mid-2005.
- Enhanced repair programs resulting in repairs and energy efficiency upgrades to 3,000 homes, including rental and owned homes.
- A disability housing supplement supporting 1,600 families beginning in 2005.
- Addressing asset accumulation. Approaches that address long-term housing affordability will be developed in order to increase home ownership among lower income households.
- Housing support services to low-income seniors to assist them in accessing home and yard maintenance services such as heavy housekeeping and ice and snow removal.

In 2003, a new program initiative, *Steps to Independence*, was developed to build the capacity and independence of family social housing tenants. Through the program, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation provides grants and mentoring to family tenants to help them establish tenant association and collectively access independence building supports and services in the community. This is expected to result in healthier families, better support for labour market attachment, and increased ability for tenants to become homeowners. The program was implemented in the late spring of 2004.

In February 2004, Saskatchewan signed a renewed agreement with the federal government to share the costs and delivery of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) in Saskatchewan. Each year the RRAP program assists approximately 500 low-income and Aboriginal families, and people with disabilities to make major repairs to their homes, including addressing health and safety issues and a lack of basic facilities.

#17. The Maintenance Enforcement Office (MEO) will streamline the process for enforcing support orders by implementing a program of direct debit and deposit to make it easier for payers to make a payment and custodial parents to receive it.

In November 2003, a new Direct Debit and Pre-authorized payment program was implemented. This program is promoted to all clients of the MEO through a poster at the payment counter, a notice in the regular annual report which all clients receive, and by ensuring the client service representatives and the officers offer it as an alternative payment option.

To date the MEO has processed 206 applications for Pre-authorized payment from payors of support, and 840 applications for Direct Deposit from recipients of support.

This program responds to the need of a custodial parent to have easy access to the support payment.

#18. The Government will expand mandatory parent education on divorce and family separation offered to parents to encourage child-centered resolutions in conflicts.

Parent education sessions were first offered in 1995 in Regina, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon.

From April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003 there were 460 participants in the voluntary parent education program and 1,209 participants in the mandatory parent education program. In 2003-04 there were 253 participants, and 2,031 participants respectively.

Since September 2003, attendance at the parent education program has been mandatory in four communities: Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Yorkton, and Regina.

In early 2004, the parent education program was offered in La Ronge, and will continue to be offered there on an "as needed" basis. Parent education is now available in 10 communities across the province.

A recent evaluation of this program found that parent education has contributed to positive changes in post-separation parenting and post-separation relationships between former partners. Parents reported reduced conflict in relation to financial issues, co-parenting arrangements, and conflict that placed children in the middle.

#19. Saskatchewan will review leave entitlements under The Labour Standards Act to ensure that employees can access job protected leave and compassionate care Employment Insurance benefits to care for family members who are critically ill.

On January 4, 2004, an eight-week compassionate care leave benefit, six weeks of which are paid, became available through the Employment Insurance Program, to employees to care for a gravely ill or dying parent, child or spouse.

The Labour Standards Act was amended on June 17, 2004, to include compassionate care leave provisions under section 44.2(1.1). The amendment ensures that Saskatchewan women and men can fully access federal Employment Insurance benefits when caring for loved ones who are gravely ill or dying, whether or not they are dependent on them.

Under the amended Act, an employee would continue to be entitled to up to 12 weeks of job protected leave for a serious personal injury or illness, and up to 16 weeks of job protected leave while receiving Employment Insurance compassionate care benefits to care for a gravely ill or dying family member, but no more than 16 weeks in total between the two types of job-protected leave.

#20. Saskatchewan Labour's Work and Family Unit will be offering a set of made in Saskatchewan Work and Family Balance tools that employers and employees can use to tailor a more family-friendly workplace.

The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio has been field-tested in a number of Saskatchewan workplaces and is scheduled for distribution in January 2005. The Portfolio consists of ideas, information, evidence-based knowledge, and survey instruments.

In the work of the Work and Family Unit, mother-employees are analyzed separately from father-employees, given the gendered nature of work and family institutions. For example, the power point presentation with the Portfolio, provides distinct Saskatchewan data analyzing mothers' and fathers' experiences.

A new initiative "Low-Waged Employees and Work-Family Issues" is a response to a community need/request which focuses primarily on women employees. This project will involve discussions with women who are lower-waged employees, thus giving "voice" to women who have not had a chance to look at work-family issues.

#21. The Government of Saskatchewan will provide a trained consultant to assist workplaces that request hands-on training in using these work and family balance tools.

Saskatchewan Labour's Work and Family Unit has contracted with a consultant who is trained in workplace culture change and in the application of tools in the Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio. Employers and employees who are interested or involved in creating workplaces that are more family-friendly are able to call the Work and Family Unit to discuss the Portfolio and the availability of the consultant.

In the presentations given by the Work and Family Unit, gender is identified as one of the key structural determinants of how the lack of work-family balance is often experienced differently depending on one's gender. In analyzing data, whenever possible, women (or mothers) are separated out as a distinct group. In this way, gender is not simply another variable, but this method recognizes gender as a key factor which influences behaviour in the way that race and socio-economic status also does.

Safety for All Saskatchewan Girls and Women in Their Homes, Schools, Institutions, Workplaces and Communities

#22. The Government of Saskatchewan will increase efforts to publicize and monitor employers' responsibility for providing violence and harassment-free workplaces.

Saskatchewan's *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1993*, and Regulations address violence in the workplace and specifically require employers to protect workers from workplace harassment, insofar as is reasonably practical.

The Act requires that employers develop and implement their harassment and violence policies in consultation with the workplace's occupational health committee. Each year the Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHSD) provides training to occupational health committee members on their roles and responsibilities specifically including their role in the development of violence and harassment policies. In addition, the OHSD provides a training seminar to supervisors, which includes a discussion of their role in preventing violence and harassment. In the 2003-04 fiscal year the OHSD provided training to 3,862 committee members and supervisors and in the first six months of 2004-05 the corresponding number was 1,436.

Saskatchewan was one of the first, and remains one of the few Canadian jurisdictions to protect certain high-risk workplace employees from violence, and all employees from harassment.

In the 2004 calendar year, the OHSD dealt with 35 matters involving harassment and 20 matters involving violence, compared with 50 and 23 respectively in 2003. The large majority of harassment complainants are female.

The OHSD released two publications to assist employers in developing a violence policy, entitled *Guide to Developing a Violence Policy Statement* and *Sample Policy on Violence*. These publications are targeted at high-risk workplaces such as health care facilities or places where workers work alone or in isolation.

The OHSD also published *Preventing Harassment at Work* that includes a sample harassment policy. The OHSD has completed a draft publication that is intended to serve as a guide to employers toward preventing harassment in the workplace and dealing with harassment complaints when they arise. This guide will be ready for publication in the 2005-06 fiscal year.

The Occupational Health and Safety Council is currently reviewing the occupational health and safety legislation including the adequacy of the sections related to harassment and violence.

#23. The provincial government will develop a plan for increasing enforcement of ergonomic (the science of designing the workplace and the job to fit the worker) requirements, with a focus on the health care sector.

The Saskatchewan Labour Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces includes a sector-targeting program to target 10 non-health care firms and 10 health care firms with the highest number of time-loss injuries over the previous three years. Increased inspection of these workplaces will be part of the strategy to reduce the number of injuries by 20% over a four-year period.

Targeted workplaces were chosen on the basis of high injury numbers. In analyzing injury data, 11 of the 20 have higher numbers of injuries for women than men. It is believed that this is due to there being a higher proportion of women in these workplaces; however, the proportion of women employed in a particular workplace is not data that is collected by the Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHSD).

The Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHSD) has contacted 10 health care employers with the highest number of time-loss injuries over the last three years, to work with them and the Worker's Compensation Board to lower time-loss injuries. Over 82% of the time-loss injuries in the targeted 10 health care firms were to females. Of these injuries to women approximately 40% were related to ergonomic issues.

There has been a 35% increase in the number of health care workers with a time-loss injury from 1998 to 2003. This is a growing percent of all time-loss injuries in Saskatchewan. In 2003, time-loss injuries in health care accounted for over 18% of all time-loss injuries in the province. This is up from 15% in 1998.

Most injuries are back and shoulder injuries which occur when workers are transferring, lifting or repositioning patients and residents. Backs are the body part most frequently injured, but the greatest increase has been in the number of shoulder injuries. These types of injuries have increased by over 45% since 1998.

Time-loss injuries most often involved nursing aides and orderlies, followed by nurses, therapists and other patient-assisting occupations. Since 1998, the greatest increase has been in time-loss injuries involving nursing assistants. Their time-loss injuries have increased by over 200% since 1998.

In the period January 1, 2004 to October 19, 2004, 71 notices of contravention or improvement orders related to ergonomics were issued. Of these 33 were for musculoskeletal injury prevention, 26 were for lifting deficiencies and 12 were for lifting, sitting or standing requirements.

Four occupational health officers who have a background in health care are currently employed by the OHSD. Three of them were recently hired as part of the Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*, are currently under review.

#24. The Government of Saskatchewan will develop and distribute new resource material on sexual harassment.

The Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHSD) of Saskatchewan Labour published

Preventing Harassment at Work which includes a sample harassment policy. The OHSD completed a draft publication that is intended to serve as an in-depth guide to employers toward preventing harassment in the workplace and dealing with harassment complaints when they arise. The draft includes a sample harassment policy which provides employers with examples of how to deal with harassment complaints. It is expected that the guide will be ready for publication in the 2005-06 fiscal year.

Information on sexual harassment is available on the Saskatchewan Labour website at www.labour.gov.sk.ca

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has a pamphlet available to the public entitled, *Sexual Harassment*. The pamphlet, as well as additional information, is available on the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission website at www.gov.sk.ca/shrc

#25. The Government of Saskatchewan will develop training to raise awareness of the importance of actively working to eliminate sexual and other forms of harassment.

Harassment continues to be a problem in the workplace that is affecting the health and safety of workers.

Over the next year, the Status of Women Office of Saskatchewan Labour will be consulting on the development of a training strategy to raise awareness of the importance of actively working to eliminate sexual and other forms of harassment.

#26. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to focus responses on meeting the needs of victims of family violence, particularly women and children.

Seventeen police-based Victim Services programs are accessible to 80% of Saskatchewan's population. These programs give priority to victims of violent crime who are predominantly women and children, and provide them with information, support and practical assistance in the immediate aftermath of a crime and throughout the criminal justice process. In 2003-04, 8,261 women and girls received assistance from these programs.

In Regina, early intervention, information and assistance with safety planning is provided to women through the Domestic Violence Early Intervention Program. Assistance was provided to 2,172 women in 2003-04.

Victim/Witness Services provide information, support, court orientation and accompaniment to adult and child victims of crime who are going through the court process. In 2003-04, they assisted 583 females.

The Sexual Assault Centre in Regina and Saskatoon offer crisis line services, in- office treatment, and accompaniment to police stations, hospitals and court. They assisted 763 women in 2003-04.

Compensation is available for reasonable expenses resulting from a criminal act of violence. It is estimated that approximately 50% of applications are received from and compensation awarded to women. Approximately 190 applications would have been received from women in 2003-04.

Funding is provided for eight Aboriginal Family Violence programs that deliver services to those affected by family violence: Regina(2), Saskatoon(2), Prince Albert(2), Yorkton(1) and Battleford(1). In cooperation with various community agencies, the funding assists Aboriginal organizations to offer more comprehensive and holistic services to address the issue of family violence. Assistance was provided to 1,080 clients in 2003-04.

A new initiative that furthered this action was the piloting of the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court in North Battleford in 2003.

The Commission on First Nations and Métis People and Justice Reform identified areas relating to women which needed to be addressed and the government continues to work on addressing these recommendations. In order to fully identify the needs, consultation continues in the North, where violent crime against women and children is the highest.

#27. The Government of Saskatchewan will explore steps to be taken to better identify and respond to the legal services and information needs of women.

Data for 2003-04 indicate that 37% of legal aid clients were female. In criminal matters, 23% were female and in family matters, 73% were female.

In 2003, the Legal Aid Commission surveyed clients to develop a baseline of client satisfaction. Particular attention was given to the needs of Aboriginal women.

The Legal Aid Commission's 2002-2005 Strategic Plan includes the goal of enhancing capacity for and access to family law services. Several staff committees are working on activities that relate to this.

With federal funds, the Legal Aid Commission is updating brochures about legal aid, developing a website to focus on access issues for clients, participating in the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court Project in North Battleford, developing options to assist clients with transportation issues, developing options to increase availability of interpreters and translators, and investigating the feasibility of a call centre.

In 2004, the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA) published "A Guide to the Law of Saskatchewan Women." Several provincial departments, including Justice, assisted in the development and revision of this comprehensive guide.

Several urban legal aid offices have developed specialized family law teams to provide services. In other offices, individual lawyers specialize in providing family law services.

The Legal Aid Commission added two family law positions (one in Regina and one in Saskatoon) to focus on maintenance enhancements, which provide expedited services to assist in getting child support orders.

#28. The Government of Saskatchewan will be developing a Northern Justice Strategy to promote dialogue about the needs of victims and offenders.

In June 2004, the First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform Commission released its final, comprehensive report. The report makes a number of recommendations, many of which relate to needs of northern residents and particularly Aboriginal residents as victims and offenders.

Since its release, Saskatchewan Justice has been reviewing the report and its recommendations in depth and developing a response together with other human services departments. The recommendations address issues related to the causes of offending and victimization as well as issues related to the justice system.

A strategy to respond to the needs of northern residents will be addressed in the overall response to the Justice Commission report.

#29. Saskatchewan will support the implementation of a national sex offender registry to detect repeat sex offenders.

The federal government proclaimed the Sex Offender Information Registration Act into force on December 15, 2004. Prior to this there was no national sex offender registry. Members from federal and provincial Corrections, RCMP, Municipal Police, Court Services, and federal and provincial Prosecutions are working together to implement the legislation in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Justice funds a province-wide Central Registry at RCMP F Division, which will input data and monitor compliance with the registry.

As of December 15, 2004 Crown Prosecutors began applying for orders to register and be placed on a national database for those sentenced for designated sexual offences on or after that date. Prosecutors also began serving notices to serving offenders to ensure they are placed on the registry. Only police will be able to access the database and only if they are investigating a suspected sex crime. The database will contain information such as the offender's name, address, offence committed, victim's age, tattoos, height, and weight.

Compared to other violent crimes, females are much more likely to be victims of sexual assault than are males. Females accounted for 85% of victims of sexual offences who reported to a sample of police services reporting to the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey in 2002.

According to the Uniform Crime Reporting in 2002, 97% of persons accused of sexual offences were male.

Health and Well-Being for All Saskatchewan Women

#30. The Government of Saskatchewan is developing Primary Health Care Services that will include a wide variety of services. By 2007, primary health care teams will serve 25% of Saskatchewan families and within 10 years the entire population will have access to these teams.

The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care* released in 2001 recognizes the importance of Primary Health Care Services and calls for the development of primary health care networks and teams of primary health care providers in all Regional Health Authorities.

Primary Health Services (PHS) is the entry point to the health system. These services include prevention, health promotion, early intervention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, supportive, and palliative care services. Primary health care services are provided by Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) in partnership with other health organizations and providers, and are delivered by inter-disciplinary Primary Health Services teams.

Saskatchewan Health worked with the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan to develop a category of Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioner) [RN(NP)] to perform expanded functions in primary health teams.

Saskatchewan Health has worked, and continues to work with the Saskatchewan Medical Association to enable physicians who prefer working under an alternate payment system, to participate as primary health care team members.

Twenty-seven Primary Health Services teams have been developed in the province. Each team includes one or more physicians, home care workers, mental health and public health personnel, physiotherapists and pharmacists and an RN(NP) or a Registered Nurse who is working towards licensure as an RN(NP).

Primary health team personnel may also include social workers, case managers, nutritionists, community therapists, and other health personnel.

Currently 18% of the Saskatchewan population is being served by Primary Health Services Teams. This is an increase of 8% from 2002-03, reflecting progress towards the goal of providing PHS services to 25% of the population by 2007.

Provincial HealthLine

The HealthLine is a convenient toll-free, province-wide telephone advice line that provides people with quick access anytime day or night, to health expertise offered by trained Registered Nurses. Established in August 2003, the HealthLine offers multilingual interpretation services and a TTY option for the hearing impaired across the province.

The HealthLine has been implemented and managed by the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority (RQHA). Over its first year of operation RQHA and Saskatchewan Health tracked call volumes, locations and other key data to evaluate HealthLine outcomes. The numbers and feedback from callers demonstrate the increasing value of the service and show that there is a strong foundation on which to expand the existing operation.

HealthLine data are analyzed by region, age, sex and other factors. Data collected for the period August 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004 show that:

- The HealthLine managed 75,921 calls.
- Approximately 40% of the callers were between 26 and 40 years of age.
- Seventy-five per cent of the callers to HealthLine were women.
- The majority of callers to HealthLine were calling for themselves or a child.
- From January to June of 2004, 6,659 callers would have visited or called an emergency room. Instead, 45% of callers were encouraged to visit their doctor within a few days or were provided with information to manage their care at home.
- There has been positive feedback from users of the HealthLine as to its effectiveness in helping them with a health problem.

#31. The provincial government will improve women's access to female health care providers in rural and remote areas by increasing opportunities for Nurse Practitioners to work in these areas.

Community needs assessments have indicated that many women wish to have access to female providers of health services, particularly with respect to reproductive health issues.

Prior to 2004, the province did not have legislation in place to allow Registered Nurses (Nurse Practitioners)[RNs (NPs)] to practice in the expanded role envisaged for primary health service delivery. There were a few Primary Health Teams in the province, and only a few qualified Registered Nurses (Nurse Practitioners) available to participate in the teams.

On April 30, 2004 the provincial legislative process was completed, enabling RNs(NPs) to practice to the full scope of their license, thereby advancing government's strategy to improve Saskatchewan residents' access to basic front-line health care.

In 2002-03 the province introduced nurse practitioner bursaries to support the enrolment of qualified Registered Nurses in the Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Program offered by the Nursing Division of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). Nine RN(NP) program bursaries were awarded in 2002-03; and 16 were awarded in 2003-04. In 2004-05, 26 bursaries were awarded: 11 to nurses entering the program, 13 to nurses undertaking a Competency Assessment Process, and two to nurses entering a qualifying course, for a total of $200,000 in bursary support.

Since April 2004, forty RNs(NPs) have been licensed to work in the province of Saskatchewan. They can assess, diagnose and prescribe for common medical disorders and refer clients to other members of the Primary Health Care Team for additional care. RNs(NPs) also work with team members to ensure preventive and screening measures are implemented to promote the health of the population being served.

The inclusion of RNs(NPs) in primary health care teams creates an opportunity for Saskatchewan women of all ages to have greater access than previously to female care providers for a full range of community-based health services – including physical examinations, prenatal care, cervical screening, assessment of common medical disorders, and referral to other services.

#32. The primary health care networks will offer respite care and adult day care, in recognition of the need for the alternatives our changing society requires.

Primary Health Care networks are linking with many existing services, which may include:

- **Home Care – Respite Care**. This is a component of home care-homemaking services. The number of respite beds available at any given time fluctuates, based on assessed need within health regions. There were 241 licensed respite beds available in the province as of March 31, 2003 increasing to 253 in 2003-04. Regional health authorities can increase respite beds from within their licensed long-term care bed complement at any time.
- **Mental Health Services**. Respite care is provided through the Approved Homes Program within health regions.
- **Day Programs.** Day programs are a component of many special care homes around the province.

#33. Following the First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal in February 2003, the government plans to expand home care to provide more community-based alternatives to institutionalized care.

The purpose of home care in Saskatchewan is to help people who need acute, palliative and supportive care to remain independent at home. The functions of home care include acute care/hospital substitution, long-term care/special-care home substitution, and prevention of health and functional breakdown. Home care services include case management and assessment, nursing, meals, therapies (in some areas), personal care, home management and homemaking, respite, minor home maintenance, and certain volunteer services such as visiting, security calls, and transportation.

The Home Care program budget in 2002-03 was $93 million, and 27,712 home care clients were provided services. In 2003-04 the Home Care program budget had increased to $96 million with 29,092 home care clients receiving service.

Saskatchewan Health began pre-implementation of the Minimum Data Set (MDS)-Home Care assessment tool and classification system in 2003-04. Through implementation of this system, a standard assessment and classification process for home care services will contribute to improved service quality and client outcomes.

Analysis of needs assessment data includes differentiation by age and sex. The Saskatchewan Home Care program provides services on a gender-inclusive basis. About 64% of all home care services over the 2003-04 fiscal year were provided to women.

According to a Statistics Canada survey of patient satisfaction with community-based services, 83.2% of Saskatchewan females age 15 and over, rated the quality of community-based health care as excellent or good compared with 78.5 % of Canadian women.

At the First Ministers' Meeting (FMM) in September 2004, agreement was reached among Federal/Provincial/Territorial jurisdictions regarding the core services to be offered in each of the three Home Care Initiative program streams. Saskatchewan Health recognizes the importance of the FMM Health commitment and will work with Regional Health Authorities to implement the initiative in 2005-06.

#34. As of January 1, 2004, Saskatchewan's personal income tax brackets, as well as the basic personal, spousal, dependent child and seniors supplement tax credit amounts, will be fully indexed to inflation.

On January 1, 2004, Saskatchewan's income tax brackets and family tax credits, including basic and spousal credits, senior supplement and dependent child credit were indexed to inflation.

For 2004, the indexation factor was 3.3%. The resulting changes to provincial tax credits, compared to 2003, include: an increase in Basic and Spousal/Equivalents amounts, from $8,000 to $8,264; an increase in the dependent child amount, from $2,500 to $2,583; an increase in the senior supplement from $1,000 to $1,033; an increase to the tax credit for seniors from $3,787 to $3,912; an increase in the Disability amount, from $6,279 to $6,486; and, an increase in the medical expense threshold, from $1,755 to $1,813.

The government will be fully indexing the tax system again in 2005. The national CPI based indexation factor for the 2005 taxation year is expected to be 1.7%.

Effective July 1, 2004, the Sales Tax Credit was enhanced as follows:

- The maximum basic adult amount was increased from $77 to $100.
- The child component was increased from $55 to $75 per child, to a maximum of $110 per family.
- The income supplement rate and benefit claw back rate were increased from 1.0% to 1.5%.

Saskatchewan Finance will report on the benefit of the income tax credit on a gender basis in the next *Action Plan Progress Report.*

#35. The Government of Saskatchewan will encourage extended families as an important resource for families involved with child protection services, using Kinship Care to keep families together.

Amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* provide a framework for extensive policy development in the area of Kinship Care. These amendments prioritize extended family placement and family preservation as the first options to be pursued when child protective services become involved with a family.

These changes will help children involved in Child and Family Services to maintain connections to their families, their communities and culture and provide an approach that is a clear alternative to placing children in the care of the Minister.

Policy development and development of an implementation plan has been the focus during 2004. More extensive consultation will be undertaken prior to proceeding with implementation. A new date will be set for proclamation of Amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* after the consultation period.

The Family-Centered Services Policy and Procedures Manual directs policy and practice in working with families under *The Child and Family Services Act*. The family-centered services approach utilizes the strength of families to create changes necessary for the safety and well-being of the children who are in need of protection. The manual was updated to reflect the new amendments and distributed in May and June 2004.

Circles, a First Nations approach that combines healing and family case conferencing, was introduced to most Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment regions.

#36. The Government of Saskatchewan will enhance community supports for families of children with severe disabilities.

The government recognized the need to focus attention on children and youth with cognitive disabilities and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Because supports tended to be ad hoc, it was recognized that this group of young people in particular would benefit from more comprehensive community supports.

Communities Working Together: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities (Cognitive Disabilities Strategy) was developed as a first phase in addressing the needs of children and youth with cognitive disabilities and FASD. This strategy was based on community discussions with key partners in June 2004. Four targeted communities, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and La Ronge, were identified as the best locations to begin building resources.

Community support has been strong and local planning committees have already been established with representation from across human service agencies. These groups are currently developing community-level assessment and action plans for *Communities Working Together*.

The 2004-05 Provincial Budget committed $2.15M annual funding for new and enhanced supports for people with FASD and other cognitive disabilities including:

- Increased access to assessment and diagnostic services.
- Increased access to supports based on need.
- Strengthened prevention and early intervention of FASD.

#37. The provincial government will implement the In Motion initiative which will increase the level of physical activity of Saskatchewan people, including girls and women, by 10% by 2005.

In Motion was officially launched on April 19, 2003. To establish a starting point, a survey was conducted in May 2003 to measure the percentage of Saskatchewan residents that were physically active. This survey included a gender and diversity lens. In March 2005, a follow-up survey will be conducted to

measure the progress towards the goal of increasing physical activity in Saskatchewan by 10%.

The key to the success of *In Motion* is the full participation of communities, schools and workplaces throughout the province. To date, 101 communities (10 northern communities and three First Nations communities), 250 schools and 183 workplaces have been declared *In Motion*.

#38. The Government of Saskatchewan will implement the Aboriginal Participation Initiative which will help to address the growing sense of urgency expressed by First Nations and Métis people about the need for preventative sport, culture and recreation programs and services for Aboriginal children and youth, including young females.

The Aboriginal Participation Initiative (API) was implemented in April 2003. The initiative focuses on building opportunities for Aboriginal people living in urban communities and in the north, through key partnerships, new grant programs and leadership programs. Aboriginal leaders at the local level play a key role in initiating projects and adjudicating grants.

The programs under the API fall into three areas – Northern Programs, Provincial Programs and Urban Programs. There are six provincial strategies associated with the Aboriginal Participation Initiatives:

- Increased well-being through participation and physical activity.
- Community-School Enhancement.
- Primary Prevention of Diabetes.
- Building Volunteer Capacity.
- Youth Leadership Development.
- Culture and Heritage.

The Government of Saskatchewan has begun an overall review of the CIF program, including API programs and from this a revised plan will be developed in 2005-06. In addition the CIF Board of trustees has initiated a review project and from this a report is expected in 2005. The upcoming reports by the CIF Board and the government may serve to establish future objectives relating specifically to girls and women based on the findings.

#39. The Government of Saskatchewan will work with Federal, Provincial and Territorial colleagues and the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity in the development of a Canadian Strategy on Women and Girls in Sport and Physical Activity,

AND

#40. The Government of Saskatchewan will work with Federal, Provincial and Territorial colleagues to advance priorities for collaborative action under the Canadian Sport Policy that increases opportunities in coaching, officiating and volunteer leadership for women, persons with a disability, Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities.

A Canadian Strategy on Sport and Physical Activity for Girls and Women is being developed by a partnership of governments and the sport community. This strategy is focused on supporting The Canadian Sport Policy by increasing sport and physical activity opportunities for girls and women. The Government of Saskatchewan continues to work with the Canadian Association for Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) and F/P/T counterparts in the development and

implementation of ACTive (The Canadian Strategy for Girls and Women through the Physical Activity and Sport).

In addition, the Government of Saskatchewan has had a number of initiatives designed to address the gender equity issue. Programs like Sport for All have provided incentives for the sport delivery system to reach beyond their traditional membership base to include underrepresented groups such as girls and women.

CIF initiatives such as *In Motion* and Aboriginal Participation, focus on less active groups such as children and youth, girls and women, Aboriginal peoples, and older people.

Girls on the Move was successfully implemented in Yorkton, Regina and Wynyard. The program provided young girls with the opportunity to participate and become physically active.

In Fall 2004, CAAWS held a training of trainers workshop on communication and conflict resolution. Saskatchewan sent two women (one Aboriginal woman) to the workshop on the condition that each would deliver three workshops to Saskatchewan women in leadership roles in sport. To date one such workshop has been delivered.

#41. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to develop and implement the Northern Health Strategy in partnership with northern health regions, the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority and Health Canada.

AND

#42. The Northern Health Strategy and implementation of the primary care networks will provide for further development and integration of alternative and traditional healing practices in the health care of Aboriginal people.

Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) are responsible for the delivery of provincial health services, and as part of that responsibility are expected to identify the health needs of the population in the region and the most appropriate ways of meeting these needs.

Efforts are being made in several health regions to accommodate a demand for culturally appropriate health service delivery. In the northern urban and rural areas, this process has been enhanced by existing primary health networks, development of the Northern Health Strategy (NHS), and plans for a new health facility at Ile-a-la Crosse.

In northern Saskatchewan elements of the primary health model have been used for many years to ensure access to everyday health services in remote areas. Nurses in isolated communities work in expanded roles and in partnership with physicians providing itinerant services. There are also informal networks of health providers that include public health inspectors, mental health and addiction workers, nutritionists and social workers.

The NHS is an initiative that provides an opportunity for health providers and community members to collaborate in more effectively planning for delivery of health services and improving the health of all northern residents. Health promotion and illness prevention are cornerstones of the strategy, and encompass the north's unique languages, and also cultural and socio-economic situation.

A Northern Health Strategy Working Group has been established and includes representatives from the two Northern Health Regions (Keewatin Yatthe and Mamawetan Churchill River), the Athabasca Health Authority, Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC), La Ronge Indian Band, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Health Canada and Saskatchewan Health.

Currently the Northern Health Strategy Working Group is focusing on the project, *Shared Paths*, for which the group received over $3M in funding through the federal Primary Health Care Transition fund. The *Shared Paths* project is forming technical advisory committees in four priority areas identified by the members of the working group: mental health and addictions, perinatal and infant health, chronic disease, and oral health. In addition, information technology and human resource issues are being considered. This project is in place until 2006.

In addition to implementing the NHS, the provincial government announced on November 9, 2004, that it is moving ahead with the plan for an innovative community facility serving Ile-a-La Crosse and the surrounding communities.

The new Ile-a-La Crosse facility will include acute and long-term care beds, emergency and general medicine, lab and x-ray, palliative care, and other hospital-based services. The facility will also serve as the base for an extended range of community outreach programs. The regional planning team and Saskatchewan Health will now work with the architects to complete the design for the new facility with construction expected to begin in early spring 2005.

#43. Saskatchewan will expand primary health care services in partnership with First Nations and Métis peoples and will give priority to areas with high-risk populations. The government recently hired an Aboriginal Diabetes Consultant who will provide support for the development and coordination of services for people with diabetes.

Diabetes is a serious disease affecting a growing number of residents, particularly within the First Nations and Métis populations. In 2000-01, the prevalence rate within the Registered Indian population was 51.4 persons per thousand, while the prevalence rate within non-Registered Indian population was 39.6 persons per thousand. A Provincial Diabetes Plan has been developed to guide the regional development of team-based services to prevent and manage diabetes.

In the development of diabetes and primary health care plans, Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) are involving care providers from First Nations communities. The Aboriginal Diabetes Consultant provides support for the development and coordination of services for people with diabetes; and a workbook is being developed to assist regional health authorities

in the establishment of partnerships with First Nations and Métis people to enhance access to primary health care services including chronic disease management.

An Aboriginal Working Group was established in January 2003 to provide advice for successful implementation of the Provincial Diabetes Plan in First Nations, Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit communities.

A *Northern Healthy Communities Partnership* has been formed in northern Saskatchewan from the former Northern Diabetes Prevention Coalition. The partnership will include mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention initiatives in addition to addressing diabetes and a range of other health issues. Plans are underway for a Northern Health Conference in 2005.

Two diabetes education programs have been developed by the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). These two programs, available through distance education, will increase educational opportunities for women by allowing them to enhance their education closer to home, and will lead to increased local employment opportunities.

As of July 1, 2003, the Saskatchewan Drug Plan was expanded to include diabetic supplies such as needles, syringes, lancets and swabs at a projected cost of $3.3 million over a nine-month period in 2003-04, and $4.8 million in 2004-05. Expanding the coverage is part of the government's commitment under the First Ministers' Health Accord to improve access to primary care, home care and catastrophic drug coverage. This measure is helping to ease the burden on Saskatchewan residents who need these supplies but suffer financial hardship as a result. (The cost of supplies for a type I diabetic ranges from $35 to $50 per month.). Over 15,000 people with diabetes have had their benefits increased to cover diabetic supplies since July 2003.

Saskatchewan Health participates in the development and implementation of a government-wide strategy, led by First Nations and Métis Relations, for building on the existing partnerships with Métis and off-reserve First Nations people. The strategy is called *A Framework for Co-operation: Saskatchewan's Strategy for Métis and Off-Reserve First Nations People*. Under the Framework, Saskatchewan Health has focused on ways to better meet the health needs of Métis and off-reserve First Nations people such that their health status will approximate that of the non-Aboriginal population in 20 years. The strategy includes initiatives in the area of diabetes, health education, representative workforce, access to primary health care services, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention and treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention services, Alcohol and Drug services, and a Successful Mothers Support Program. Saskatchewan Health's partners in this strategy are the other departments of the provincial government.

Saskatchewan Health has also been working with Health Canada, other provinces and territories, national Aboriginal groups and the Diabetes Council of Canada in the development of a National Diabetes Strategy.

#44. A new hospital will be built in Fort Qu'Appelle that will offer space for First Nations health services, including a spiritual center, shared vision center and a winter healing lodge.

The previous Fort Qu'Appelle Indian Hospital was built nearly 70 years ago. The new $12.8 million All Nations' Healing Hospital was opened in Fort Qu'Appelle on June 12, 2004. This new facility is located on First Nations' land and operates as an independent non-profit corporation affiliated with the Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority.

The hospital includes 13 acute care beds, one palliative care bed, a large outpatient and diagnostic area and support services. There is also space for First Nations health services, a shared Vision Centre that will provide mental health services, and a spiritual cultural program.

The province contributed $11.2 million to building of the All Nations Healing Hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle. This is a unique, community-centered facility where traditional values and concepts are integrated with health care services. The culturally sensitive design elements accommodate an approach to health care that recognizes the relationship between mind, spirit, body and community; and integrates traditional values and concepts with health services.

In 2004-05 the Saskatchewan Health Budget included $22 million for capital construction to ensure health care facilities are located where they are needed.

Equitable Participation of Women in Leadership and Decision-Making in All Sectors of Society and the Economy

#45. The Status of Women Office will co-ordinate and support the delivery of gender-based analysis (GBA) training to key staff from across all government departments over the next three to five years.

In February 2003, 42 policy, program and executive management within government participated in two-day training sessions. In March 2004, 36 government and Crown employees participated in two-day training sessions. Follow up to determine gender-based analysis usage in policy and program work is being analyzed.

Status of Women Office prepared a brief overview presentation for executive management about gender-based analysis. To date, 228 senior management, including deputy ministers, have participated in this presentation.

Status of Women Office has prepared brochures and numerous examples of GBA which have been shared with government and Crown employees.

Status of Women Office has piloted a one-day training session which will be delivered through the Office. This training will begin in early 2005 and is expected to be available to government and Crown employees on a monthly basis.

While there are many examples that could be cited, here are a few specific to departments/ Crowns:

- As part of Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment's citizenship focus, gender-based analysis is used to develop policies and programs that effectively respond to the unique circumstances of citizens, such as the new *Homes First* Strategy.
- Policy development at Saskatchewan Information Services Corporation (ISC) is integrated throughout the organization. This corporate model for handling of policy suggests that the availability and delivery of GBA training to individuals throughout the organization would be optimal. ISC is encouraging employees responsible for policy development to learn more about GBA.
- Within the public service, as part of ongoing classification plan training, the Public Service Commission (PSC) provides an overview of gender bias in job evaluations and explains how biases are addressed in the design and ongoing application of classification plans. They also ensure awareness and access to work/ life balance through regular articles and updates to the employee and work/life balance sections of the PSC website.
- The Saskatchewan Transportation Company has inclusion of employment equity goals on the Balance Scorecard, reporting quarterly. They have completed surveys identifying need to improve services for women traveling with families.

- Gender-based analysis awareness and training has influenced new policy and program development in the Office of Protocol and Honours, including the makeup of selection committees for the province's Honours and Awards Program and encouraging nominations of women.
- In presentations given by Saskatchewan Labour's Work and Family Unit, gender is identified as one of the key structural determinants of how the lack of work-family balance is often experienced differently depending on gender.
- Gender and gender/age considerations enter into health needs assessment processes and decision-making about priorities in health service delivery.
- GBA trained staff have been able to encourage greater applications from women's organizations and make more appropriate and effective recommendations.

#46. Advisors on Women's Policy will be appointed in all CIC Crown corporations.

Advisors have been appointed in Information Services Corporation, SaskEnergy, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, SaskPower, SaskTel, Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and SaskWater.

#47. The provincial government will ensure that all decisions that come before Cabinet have a gender lens applied by analysts when they consider the situation to be addressed and the solutions being proposed.

Intragovernmental Advisors on Women's Policy, Cabinet Planning Unit Policy Advisors, Associate Deputy Minister to the Premier/ Secretary to the Committee on Planning and Priorities, and government policy analysts have received training in gender-based analysis (GBA).

Educational workshops are being prepared within the government to increase the understanding of GBA.

#48. The Government of Saskatchewan will hold an annual forum of women's groups, Advisors on Women's Policy, and government senior officials.

The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* commits to a process that will give women a stronger voice in decision-making.

The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* was developed through consultation with 60 participants representing women's organizations and organizations that serve women at a Forum in November 2002. This Forum provided women with the opportunity to identify their priorities to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and other key decision-makers.

A second Forum was held in April 2004 with 90 participants from across the province. This one-day meeting provided an opportunity for participants to network, meet new people and voice their issues and ideas to the Status of Women Office. In April 2005, the *Progress Report on the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* will be discussed in detail with representatives from the women's community.

#49. The Government of Saskatchewan will work with private sector companies, Crown corporations, and other partners in Saskatchewan to make the business case for increasing women's participation in senior decision-making roles.

In 2003, the Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women released a document entitled *Workplaces that Work: Creating a Workplace Culture that Attracts, Retains, and Promotes Women*.

highlights bottom-line business reasons for making changes to workplace cultures to increase the recruitment, retention and promotion of skilled women workers.

Information, including brochures, was shared with business, labour, and women's groups as well as all Members of the Legislative Assembly. Consultation with external stakeholders and other government departments and Crowns will continue.

#50. Priority will continue to be given to increasing the number of directors on government appointed boards who are members of equity groups including women.

As of 2004, the percentage of women on government appointed Boards was 34%.

As of November 2004, the percentage of women on CIC Subsidiary Crown Boards increased to 36.8% from 2o.7% in 2003.

"Diversity candidates" is one of the criteria to be included on CIC Crown Boards.

#51. The Government of Saskatchewan will work with community organizations to establish The Rural Leadership Development Program, with emphasis on women, Aboriginal peoples and youth.

The Rural Strategy (released in December 2002) identified leadership training targeted at youth, women and Aboriginal peoples as an initiative.

In 2002-03 Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization (SAFRR) Rural Issues Office (RIO) contracted with Saskatchewan Council for Community Development (SCCD) to enable them to expand the existing *Leadership Saskatchewan* program to increase emphasis on women, youth, and Aboriginal peoples.

Upon further analysis, SCCD determined that women are already well represented in Leadership Saskatchewan programming (if not overrepresented – more than half of participants are women).

Overall, in 2003-04, SCCD presented six *Leadership Saskatchewan* programs, involving 142 people. Of these: 76 were youth; 77 were First Nations; 16 were Métis; and 104 (73%) were female.

Funds ($90,000) helped SCCD to further develop the Aboriginal component of the course and also provided direct sponsorship. While many participants are able to find sponsors to cover the course costs, in some cases Aboriginal people, women, or people with low incomes often have fewer connections within the community and are less able to find sponsors. SCCD used some of the funds ($8,830) received from SAFRR to subsidize fees for several participants to allow for greater diversity.

#52. The Aboriginal Women's Program will continue to enable provincial Aboriginal women's organizations to undertake special projects and policy development activities of benefit to their respective members.

Funding to Aboriginal women's organizations from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004 was $49,500. An additional $10,000 was provided to Aboriginal groups that initiated projects dedicated to women and girls. Thirty thousand dollars was allocated for Métis Women's Initiatives within the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan's governance process.

During the April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 fiscal year, $64,000 was allocated to Aboriginal women's organizations. An additional $15,100 has been allocated to Aboriginal groups that are initiating projects dedicated to women and girls. Thirty thousand dollars was allocated for Métis Women's Initiatives within the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan governance process, however, that process has been suspended.

Gender-based analysis (GBA) trained employees have been able to encourage greater applications from Aboriginal women's organizations and other groups initiating projects focusing on Aboriginal women and girls.

#53. The provincial government will continue to increase the representation of women in management*, from the 2003 level of 35% to its long-term goal of 45%.

*refers to women in management in the Public Service.

The representation of women in management within the public service has increased from 35% in October 2003 to 36.7% as of July 31, 2004.

The method of calculating representation rates has been reviewed and revised. New baselines have been established as of March 31, 2004. The calculation for women in management has been separated into two statistics: women in senior management and women in middle management/other managers. The key reason for this separation is to eliminate barriers related to in-scope and out-of-scope management. Prior to this separation, in-scope managers were not included in the women in management data.

#54. The Government of Saskatchewan will support the development of a Northern Saskatchewan Women's network.

At the request of the Status of Women Office (SWO), Saskatchewan Northern Affairs (SNA) coordinated a March 11, 2003 meeting between the SWO and 15 northern women. The SWO provided an overview of the creation of the office, and consulted/listened to issues identified by northern women.

As a "first step" in the development of a Northern Saskatchewan Women's Network, on April 20, 2004, several northern women formed a steering committee to guide project proposal development for potential funding from the Status of Women Canada.

The Status of Women Office and Status of Women Canada met with several northern Saskatchewan women's groups, provided overviews of their organizations and recent activities, and identified potential supports to help the northern women organize a network.

#55. Saskatchewan will facilitate the number of women recognized through the Saskatchewan Honours and Awards Program, paying particular attention to the diversity of women in the province.

As of March 31, 2003, the percentage of women nominated for the Saskatchewan Order of Merit and the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal was 37%. There is no measurement as of October 1, 2003. The results at the end of the 2003-04 fiscal year (March 31, 2004) were 30% women. Results will be tallied again at the end of 2004-05 fiscal year.

The 2004 Saskatchewan Order of Merit event was held on November 16, 2004. Two women were honoured for their contributions to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the province and its residents.

The 2004 Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal event was held on May 13, 2004. Four women were recognized for outstanding volunteer service and exceptional community involvement.

The Office of Protocol and Honours promotes the Honours and Awards Program throughout the province. The targeted results are limited by the uptake of Saskatchewan people to nominate women.

#56. The Government of Saskatchewan will undertake a review of how lottery funds currently serve women in the areas of sport, culture and recreation during the life of the existing lottery license agreement which expires on March 31, 2006.

Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation is undertaking a major review of the participation of First Nations and Métis people in lottery-funded sport, culture and recreation services. This review will assess the participation of different sectors of the Aboriginal population (including women) with a view to supporting improved participation in the next Lottery Agreement.

#57. The province will commit to supporting International Women's Day events annually.

The United Nations formally proclaimed March 8th International Women's Day in 1975.

Since 2003, the Status of Women Office has been providing small grants to non-profit, community-based women's groups to support an International Women's Day event or activity that promotes a status of women issue. The response to the International Women's Day Grant Program over the past three years has been very positive.

In March 2003 the Status of Women Office sponsored 63 organizations that hosted 30 events. In March 2004, the Office sponsored 69 organizations that hosted 31 events.

This Program is a tangible means of supporting community-based women's organizations and helping them to celebrate and profile the contributions and work of Saskatchewan women. It also profiles the work of these organizations to address equality issues and increase public awareness about the history and significance of International Women's Day in the broader community.

Saskatchewan
Labour
Status of
Women Office

Saskatchewan Centennial 2005

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March 2005